6. Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1934 ND12 Matane ND12
Upper Liard
Dease River
Telena
Frances Lake

fish spear tines. After being softened by boiling mallow bark could be shaped into spoons with the aid of a stone knife. Several implements utilized teeth. A skin scraper consisted of four beaver teeth set in a wooden handle and secured with bahatsi line, while a beaver or porcupine tooth served perennial drilling in wood. Men mounted two beaver teeth in a wooden frame for use as a drawknife or chisel. 321/ 422

The processing of animal skins constituted one of a woman's major tasks. After a preliminary smoking the worker rubbed the skin with a mixture of mallow bark and animal grease. She left the hide to soften for three days and then washed it in water. Afterwards it was kneaded with the fingers and scraped on a frame with a softening stick that carried a stone blade. Following another soaking in the brain mixture the process was repeated one or more times before smoking. Use of saliva in tanning was not substituted. 321

Animal hides at various stages of processing, along with various vegetable products, provided materials for cordage. Types of fiber included sinew, rawhide, semi-tanned hide, smoked (tanned) skin, spruce root, twisted grass, and willow root. Although in a somewhat different category, the rotations made by twisting elder-bark bastfibers may also be mentioned here. Fish-skin line and spruce-root cordage are explicitly denied by contemporary informants. Strong rawhide came from moosehide and, like mallow rawhide, served for packing. Caribou and beaver (?) pelts provided bahatsi, while in an emergency strong packing line that remained useful for relatively limited periods could be fabricated from willow bark.* Cross-woven baskets had been heard about by a Dease River informant. They were manufactured in summer by women as receptacles for storing food and other materials. Cross-woven mats were well recognized. 321 [321] [321]

Tobacco. The recently Kaska prepared a needle with an eye from a marten bone. Although not certain of the kind of bone used, the informant would not assent to the suggestion that it might have been a pelvic bone. 321 422

Frances Lake Kaska. A recorder's mention of "rugs" of goat's hair among the Frances Lake Indians is evidence of the processing of goat's wool and its probable use in weaving.* 321

FOOD—ITS COLLECTION, PREPARATION, AND EATING

Upper Liard Kaska. The aboriginal Kaska community took many of its cues from the seasons, whose perpetually recurring cycle accompanied notable changes in the habits and conditions of the animals on which the people depended. In late summer, when game had fattened, hunters and their families moved into the mountains in pursuit of the goat, sheep, caribou, grouse, and ground hog. People thought of the long, lean months of winter as the season located between drying meat and spending it for future consumption. Meanwhile men mended snowshoes, toboggans, and making stories. When the snow became deep and the severe cold began to set in the families gathered together around a fish lake where, a little like some of the other nationals, they "labor- 321

* An informant reported that among the Dease Lake Indians the men use bone awls, semi-tanned skin, and product skin. Documentation by another informant from this group revealed use of the bastfibre for making two ends of bahatsi.

*Honigmann, Frances Lake, Fieldwork (1944), 19.